

Gosforth Junior High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108520
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	309718
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Prof Mike Goodfellow
Headteacher	Mr Hugh Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
School address	Jubilee Road Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 1DY
Telephone number	0191 2853060
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Age group	9–13
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gosforth Junior High is situated north of Newcastle city centre. It was previously Gosforth West Middle which no longer required special measures at the time of the last report in 2006. The Junior High school was created as a result of a federation with Gosforth High School and shares the same governing body, leadership team and principal. A senior member of the federation staff has the daily responsibility for running the school. The number of students who speak English as an additional language and come from minority ethnic groups is above average. There are more pupils with a statement of special educational need than normally found as the school hosts the city's Visually Impaired Unit and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gosforth Junior High is a good and improving school with outstanding features. Leadership, management and the capacity to improve are excellent. The highly effective leadership of the principal of the federation is continuing to steer the school in the right direction. Another outstanding feature is the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the pupils. The quality of governance is excellent and the school knows itself exceptionally well.

The school has gone through a period of consolidation since the last inspection when it was brought out of special measures very quickly as a result of the outstanding senior management team created by the federation of the old middle and existing high schools. The rate of improvement is again moving at pace and can be seen in rising standards and higher achievement.

Achievement is good and standards are average and above in all subjects, often from a low starting point for many students. The progress of all pupils has improved, including those with English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which was a point for improvement in the last report. Targets are met despite a dip in the 2007 results due to a cohort which had more pupils with below average attainment. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that standards are rising, progress is good and the trend of improvement is continuing. Test results in mathematics and science are better than they are in English. The school knows improving the rate of progress in English is a priority and is taking effective action to bring this about, for example writing has significantly improved in Year 8, particularly by the most able pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and inspection evidence confirms the school's view that some is outstanding. Behaviour is good and attendance is average. The curriculum is good and the range of extra activities and educational visits is wide. Personal development is good and pupils are effectively guided and supported. The school knows that using data more sharply to raise achievement and standards in all subjects is a key priority for further improvement. Parents strongly support the school and the comment of one reflected the views of many when saying, 'the school is pushing forward at an excellent pace, fuelled by a very strong management team'. Resources are effectively deployed and some poor accommodation is well used to give good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress in English.
- Use school data more sharply to improve achievement and standards in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average and above. A high proportion of pupils start with below average attainment and skills. Pupils make good progress including those with English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2007, there was a dip in results because the cohort had many pupils with below average attainment.

Test results in mathematics and science are better than they are in English. The school is taking effective action to improve results, particularly in English where boys are not doing as well as

girls. Inspection evidence confirms standards are rising, achievement is good and the trend of improvement is continuing.

School data indicates that current Year 8 pupils are on course to achieve their targets and exceed them in English, mathematics, and science. Writing has significantly improved in Year 8, particularly with the most able pupils. Pupils make good progress in other subjects and standards are average and above by the end of Year 8. They are highest in history, geography, music, art, and design and technology. A comment by one parent represents the views of many others when saying, 'I am delighted at the progress my child has made'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and learn with enthusiasm and excitement. Pupils are polite, helpful and treat each other with respect. They have a very clear sense of right and wrong. Very good relationships contribute to the strong sense of community and friendship.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and the school is harnessing the unique backgrounds of pupils when they start. For example, cultural heritage is researched and shared with staff and pupils to enhance understanding. As a result, respect and racial harmony permeate the school.

Year 8 pupils enjoy taking on the role of 'Peer Mentor' and assist younger pupils by listening to them read. They treat their environment with respect and are considerate of the needs and safety of others as seen in their sensible behaviour around the school.

Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy the positive and highly constructive 'praise' code, where staff are diligent in rewarding effort, achievement, attendance and the wide range of contributions pupils make to their community during each day. The supervised 'active play' facilities at break and lunchtimes are well liked and pupils choose to eat from a range of healthy foods. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils develop into mature, confident and outgoing young people, very well prepared socially for the next stage of their education. A typical comment from a parent was, 'my son has developed a strong sense of self-confidence and independence in his time at the school'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some that is outstanding. Most teachers plan a range of interesting activities for pupils which meet their learning needs well. Pupils of all abilities are set appropriately demanding work. The vast majority concentrate well and are keen to learn. Lessons are characterised by very good relationships between adults and pupils. The best lessons move forward at pace and challenge pupils to think for themselves at the very edge of their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils discuss their ideas sensibly in small groups and express themselves clearly when answering searching questions. An outstanding example of this was seen when Year 8 pupils were discussing the concept of 'power' using characters from Shakespeare's play 'The Tempest' using a range

of examples from present times including the Prime Minister, celebrities and a local football manager. Learning for all pupils in the group was rooted in reality and very rapid.

In some other lessons, pupils are not given the same opportunity to work independently and build their self confidence. Teachers use assessment information well which helps them to gain a clear picture of what each pupil knows and can do. The data is not used sharply enough to improve achievement and standards in all subjects. Marking is regular and usually gives pupils clear information about what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features, for example the provision of extra-curricular activities and visits. The curriculum is lively, challenging and enjoyed by pupils. Modifications since the last inspection are ensuring the needs of all groups of pupils are met with increasingly good effect, although the full impact has yet to be seen.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 normally work with one teacher and additional specialist support where necessary, for instance in physical education or music. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 follow a condensed Key Stage 3 curriculum in English, mathematics and science. This helps them to begin Key Stage 4 work a year early in these subjects when they move to high school. A wide range of well attended sporting, creative, cultural, and special interest clubs and groups enrich pupils' experiences of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for all pupils are good. Teachers and support staff provide a secure, safe and caring environment. The needs of all groups of pupils are well provided for, including vulnerable children and those from minority ethnic groups. Careful and detailed plans are in place to support learning and development. The school maintains close and regular liaison with external agencies in order to meet pupils' personal and learning needs.

Safeguarding and child protection requirements and procedures are clear and understood by staff. Pupils know their personal targets in English, mathematics and science and what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal leads very effectively in a relentless drive to raise achievement. The enthusiasm of senior and middle managers to strive for improvement is an excellent feature. The impact of this purposeful leadership is clearly evident in the strong consolidation of the rapid improvement seen in recent years.

Staff work well as a team and morale is high. A well attended, voluntary, fortnightly meeting of the staff focus group ensures that all staff feel an integral part of the whole school drive for improvement. The school is highly self-critical. Accurate and detailed evidence on all aspects of the school is used when evaluating performance and the school knows itself exceptionally well. The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorously carried out by senior leaders and

middle managers and challenging targets are being used to raise standards. Some poor accommodation is effectively deployed. Value for money is good.

Teachers receive excellent guidance and support through continuing professional development to improve their practice. Governance is outstanding and plays a key role in helping the school improve. Governors are very supportive, but they do not avoid asking challenging and pertinent questions when the need arises. They are very well informed and highly effective in monitoring the work of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Age group

9–13

Inspection date(s)

25–26 June 2008

Inspection number

309718

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gosforth Junior High School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1DY

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Gosforth Junior High is a good and improving school with outstanding features.
- Leadership, management and the capacity to improve are excellent.
- The quality of governance is excellent and the school knows itself very well.
- Achievement is good and standards are continuing to rise.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding.
- The curriculum is good and the range of extra activities and educational visits is wide.
- Your personal development is good and you are effectively guided and supported.
- The outstanding leadership of the federation, principal and senior managers is continuing to steer the school in the right direction.

Your teachers and the staff work exceptionally hard and want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- improve the rate of progress in English
- use school data more sharply to improve achievement and standards in all subjects even more.

I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector